

REMARKS

Claims 1-20 are pending. Claims 1, 9, 12, and 14 have been amended. Applicant notes with appreciation the conditional allowance of claims 14-16 and has written claim 14 in independent form. Claims 15 and 16 depend from claim 14 and are maintained in their original form.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-4, 6-9, 11-13, and 17-20 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 in light of U.S. Patent No. 6,766,285 to Allen et al. ("Allen"). As the PTO provides in MPEP § 2131, "[t]o anticipate a claim, the reference must teach every element of the claim...." (emphasis added). Therefore, each reference applied under 35 U.S.C. § 102 must disclose all of the elements of the claims to sustain the rejection. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections on the following grounds.

Claims 1-4, 6-9, and 11

Claim 1, as amended, recites in part creating an attribute file containing the product contributive attribute and associating the product contributive attribute with the product by assigning the attribute file to the product, comparing the product contributive attribute and the operation acceptance attribute prior to performing the operation on the product, and determining whether the comparison indicates that the product is not compatible with the operation.

Nowhere does Allen teach or suggest the use of an attribute file or the assignment of such a file to a product. Instead, Allen "simulates all of the actions that would occur at that processing location." (col. 4, lines 6 and 7). Furthermore, Allen discloses that "[t]he simulation module for the processing location accounts for any special processing needs introduced by the processing recipe by simulating the implementation of the recipe on the upcoming wafer lot. The simulation module is programmed to conduct verification of the compatibility of tooling and software in relation to the processing recipe." (col. 4, lines 29-34) (emphasis added).

In addition, Allen fails to teach or suggest the use of a simple comparison. Instead, Allen is directed to the use of simulations based on information sent from a previous application to the next application. For example, Allen describes that “[t]he first application results are then communicated via the material handling system to a second application processing location. At the second application processing location the wafer processing application is simulated, via a simulation module, on the upcoming wafer lot based on the first application results.” (col. 3, lines 32-37) (emphasis added). In another embodiment, Allen discloses that a “system 100 ‘looks ahead’ to the next processing location (location 106) and simulates all of the actions that would occur at that processing location.” (col. 4, lines 4-7) (emphasis added). “The simulation module for the processing location accounts for any special processing needs introduced by the processing recipe by simulating the implementation of the recipe on the upcoming wafer lot.” (col. 4, lines 29-32) (emphasis added). Applicant submits that the simulations disclosed in Allen, which rely on information obtained from previous operations, fail to teach or suggest the comparison of two attributes recited in claim 1.

Accordingly, Allen fails to teach or suggest every element of claim 1 as required by MPEP § 2131, and claim 1 is allowable over the cited reference. Claims 2-4, 6-9, and 11 depend from and further limit claim 1 and are allowable for at least the same reason as claim 1.

Claims 12, 13, 17, and 18

Claim 12, as amended, recites in part determining if a substrate routing attribute associated with the substrate corresponds to an operation contributive element associated with the operation, wherein the substrate routing attribute indicates a material not acceptable to the substrate, and wherein the operation contributive attribute indicates a material used in the operation.

Allen fails to teach or suggest this element of claim 12 as required by MPEP § 2131, and claim 12 is allowable over the cited reference. Claims 13, 17, and 18 depend from and further limit claim 12 and are allowable for at least the same reason as claim 12.

Claims 19 and 20

Claim 19 recites, in part, an attribute file associated with a product, wherein the attribute file includes at least one of a product contributive attribute and a product routing attribute, and compatibility check means to determine if the product is compatible with the operation based on a comparison of the product contributive or product routing attribute with the operation contributive or operation acceptance attribute.

As discussed previously, Allen fails to teach or suggest the use of an attribute file. Instead, Allen “simulates all of the actions that would occur at that processing location.” (col. 4, lines 6 and 7). Furthermore, Allen discloses that “[t]he simulation module for the processing location accounts for any special processing needs introduced by the processing recipe by simulating the implementation of the recipe on the upcoming wafer lot. The simulation module is programmed to conduct verification of the compatibility of tooling and software in relation to the processing recipe.” (col. 4, lines 29-34) (emphasis added).

In addition, Allen fails to teach or suggest the use of a simple comparison. Instead, Allen is directed to the use of simulations based on information sent from a previous application to the next application. For example, Allen describes that “[t]he first application results are then communicated via the material handling system to a second application processing location. At the second application processing location the wafer processing application is simulated, via a simulation module, on the upcoming wafer lot based on the first application results.” (col. 3, lines 32-37) (emphasis added). In another embodiment, Allen discloses that a “system 100 ‘looks ahead’ to the next processing location (location 106) and simulates all of the actions that would occur at that processing location.” (col. 4, lines 4-7) (emphasis added). “The simulation module for the processing location accounts for any special processing needs introduced by the processing recipe by simulating the implementation of the recipe on the upcoming wafer lot.” (col. 4, lines 29-32) (emphasis added). Applicant submits that the simulations disclosed in Allen, which rely on information obtained from previous operations, fail to teach or suggest the comparison of two attributes recited in claim 19.

Serial No.: 10/791,930
Response to Non-Final Office Action
dated March 24, 2005

Patent / Docket No. 24061.49/2003-0125
Customer No.: 42717

Accordingly, Allen fails to teach or suggest every element of claim 19 as required by MPEP § 2131, and claim 19 is allowable over the cited reference. Claim 20 depends from and further limits claim 19 and is allowable for at least the same reason as claim 19.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 5 and 10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Allen in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,567,716 to Yasuda ("Yasuda"). Claims 5 and 10 depend from and further limit claim 1, which is allowable for reasons described above. Accordingly, claims 5 and 10 are allowable.

Conclusion

It is respectfully submitted that all the claims in the application are in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner deem that any further amendment is needed to place this application in condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the below listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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R-107209

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